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POEMS

P O E M S

BY

Palmer
FREDERIC AND MARY PALMER



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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DEDICATION

TO GEORGE HERBERT PALMER

EVER the Leader! since we pushed from shore
In daring voyage across the Boxford Pond,
And I looked up, and thought what lay beyond
Your vast omniscience God still held in store.

I heard, through Poetry's Garden led by you,
The clash of Arthur's knights; the dreary call
Of curlews flying over Locksley Hall,
And the cold silence of the Church of Brou.

And as we walked where men of Thought had trod,
You cleared the way; and lo! beneath my feet
The ground grew firm, and I pressed on to greet,
Confident, unabashed, the face of God.

So close we dwelt, we hardly stood apart.
Before one spoke, subtly the other heard,
As hand serves hand without the need of word
In quick response, as pulse keeps touch with heart.

DEDICATION

Now at the restful gate of Age you stand.

Shall I, outstripping you for once, press past,
And so become the leader at the last,
And turn and thence reach back to you a hand ?

Or shall you still be foremost ? in the throng
Of swift-winged angels speeding far and near
On God's bright ministrations, there as here
Still foremost, guiding, loving, generous, strong!

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PROLOGUE

PROLOGUE

THAT I can tell of Heaven and Hell
 These coming lines may show.
But how much through experience,
And how much through an inner sense —
 That you shall never know.

For I have trod the common sod
 And seen it burst in flower,
And bushes all with God aflame,
And heard sweet suckling babes proclaim
 His beauty and His power.

And I have gazed as one amazed,
 Beholding things Divine;
Who, careless, sitting down to eat,
Finds himself served with angels' meat
 And sacramental wine.

But just as up he lifts the cup
 And reverently drains,
He feels a bitter poison dart
From out the draught, and stab his heart
 And burn along his veins.

PROLOGUE

Can he not tell of Heaven and Hell?

Yet what these lines may show —
How much experience has taught,
How much imagination brought —
That you shall never know.

EARTH

THE NORTH SHORE

THOU ceaseless murmur of the unquiet sea,
Sounding forever on this rocky coast,
These ancient rocks, for all their age can boast,
Are but of yesterday compared to thee!
They knew the early world, when men were not,
And huge sea-monsters swam in silence by;
They knew earth's mighty powers, which gradually
Welded them and upreared them in this spot.
But thou art still the same as when thy roar
Upon creation's primal stillness burst,
And God's own hand ordained thee at the first,
And morning stars sang forth with awful power.
God heard thy voice when first a voice hadst thou.
I stand upon the shore and hear thee now!

THE SOUTH SHORE

WHAT subtle yearning haunts these sea-born hills?
Some revelation, sure, they soon will make;
Some mighty utterance is about to break,
And calm the throb with which my spirit thrills.
This broad bare moor, with undulations slow,
Is holding something in; these dunes of sand,
As endless and inscrutable they stand,
Preserve a mystery I fain would know.
North, south, the yellow beach sweeps dim away.
Here shall I find it? But the waters grim
Rise silent up to the horizon's rim
And keep the secret I would have them say

All beckon solemnly and round me draw,
Yet answer not. And I rejoice with awe.

WELLFLEET PONDS

IN cups of green they lie
Under the sky,
Taking its color deep
Into their sleep.

Mirrors they are, of glass;
And clouds that pass
See their own bodies white
All bathed in light.

Gulls with their pinions soft
Wheel up aloft;
Hérons, with heavy flight,
Cry to the night.

Sea-breezes salt with spray
Make wavelets gay,
Rough-tumbling, like the sea,
White-capped and free.

Twilight falls like a balm;
Then utter calm.
In their green cups they lie,
Under the sky.

SUMMER

DOWN on the grass beneath a tree I lay
When all the year was rich with days of June,
And all the month with one sweet afternoon.
I saw the heat uprising from the hay,
And heard from far upon his busy way
A bumble-bee come booming onward. Soon
His hum was lost amid the quiet tune
Which all the fields sing on a Summer day.
The reeds within the brook moved to and fro,
Close by, a pickerel jumped and caught a fly.
Above, the fleecy, piled-up clouds moved slow;
So slow the motion scarce would catch the eye.
O'erhead, a breath of wind was rustling low,
And made the tree-tops gossip dreamily.

TO A CUMULUS CLOUD

THOU spirit of the full midsummer time,
 Floating sublime
In the broad heaven, and towering high aloft
 In whiteness soft,
Calm on thy heavenly business thou dost go,
 Majestic, slow.
O'er all our feverish bustle thou dost brood —
 Our multitude
Of small concerns and great. The child at play,
 The soldier gray,
Guilty and guiltless in adjoining cells,
 Deserts and wells —
Thou settest up a glory in the sky
 To judge these by,
That men may lift their eyes and look thereon,
 And count what's gone
Of bliss or woe as holding in life's race
 But second place;
While high above them tower things like thee —
 Thoughts large and free,
Peace brooding deep with soul-refreshing balm,
 Unruffled calm,
Self-guided motion which no shock can swerve,
 Power in reserve,
Life's massive forces holding — what is best —
 Rest, ever rest.

BOXFORD

THE PARK

FOLD upon fold of the magical green;
And the Run, like a ribbon, runs blue in the grass,
And the little bridge looks at itself in the glass,
And the squirrels go frisking the leaves between.

And the willows and shadows blend soft in the heat,
And the edge of the wood, where the fairies dance,
Stands beckoning dreamily, full of romance,
And the path leading inward is soft to the feet.

And blest is the beautiful summer to-day,
Thy birthday, who hast all the summer in Thee —
The glow of the flower, the strength of the tree,
And the fairy romance of the deep woodland way.

BOXFORD

THE PINES

Thou winsome, wonder-working nest of green,
Whence comes the joy the quiet hours bring?
It is not all of earth, this life serene,
Where present moments shine and memories cling.

This quiet scene, how easy to pass by
And never guess the secrets that we know!
A low grey house, with tangled shrubbery,
A shadow-dotted country road below:

In front, green sloping fields, that almost seem,
So warm and still beneath the sun they rest,
As if they lay in some enchanted dream,
Quietly breathing as a baby's breast.

Beyond, the dark green pines, with shadows caught
And kept within them all the summer day;
Those deep abiding shadows, like the thought
We keep within our hearts and never say.

High thoughts are here, where spirits blest have been.
Souls that have moved the world have rested here,
Have fed their eyes on waves of sun-bathed green,
Have fed their hearts on peace deep and serene,
And found in field and wood a Heaven near.

NORTH CONWAY

THE STORM

WHAT wizard loveliness! Mysterious, large,
Behind a shimmering veil of falling snow,
Its pines all dim and heavy, row on row,
In outline strange, uncertain, looms Kearsarge.
The nearer trees, bowed gently with their charge
Of woolly white, how delicate they grow!
More and more lace-like, dream-like, losing so
All weight. The building near, a magic barge
Becomes, alluring, beckoning us away
Into some silent country far and white,
Where foot-falls make no sound, and day and night
Change only from enchanted gray to gray.

Muffled in beauty so, how endless far
All petty cares, all restless yearnings are!

NORTH CONWAY

THE MORNING AFTER

The golden glory of the morning light,
The shining silver world — they meet and kiss,
Like lovers long apart. What joy is this!
Kearsarge stands plain and proud, a noble sight
Against the blue; the pines, all tipped with white,
Point up like countless spires, in conscious bliss;
And Washington, in misty chrysalis,
Holds yet a shred of cloud about his height,
Yet needs must glitter, through the heavenly veil
Shining resplendent, like a silver shield.
Soft violet, grey, and brown tint every field
Where bush or shadow lies on hill or dale.

At last triumphant beauty holds full sway;
There is no sorrow in the world to-day.

TO A WOOD-THRUSH

THOU shy brown bird, whose distant note comes
ringing

Clear as the tinkle of a silver bell,

In what sequestered thicket dost thou dwell?

What ear enraptured waits upon thy singing?

For such a wondrous song unheard were sure

A waste that Nature's wasteful self could not endure.

And yet that note in utter solitude,

Pouring its flood where none may see or hear,

Suffices to itself. One listening ear,

One wandering step which haply might intrude

Into thy hidden bower, and thou art flown.

Thy song is for thyself and for thyself alone.

The day's each splendor dost thou claim for thine.

The morning's freshness hears thy joy upswelling,

And in the high, hot noon again thou'rt telling

Thy soul its story, and at day's decline,

When over all a hushed pink silence broods,

Thy note comes rippling forth from out the darken-
ing woods.

Kindred thou hast, spirit of liquid clearness!

The crystal sparkle of the mountain brook

TO A WOOD-THRUSH

Glinting in sun and shade; the maiden's look
When first her lover's kiss proclaims her dearness;
Soft childish laughter; love-words heard anigh;
The pale young crescent moon, hung in the western
sky.

Thy voice comes from a realm remote, where pain
And anxious problems and depressing care
Have never entered; in whose morning air
We feel the early world beat young again,
And see Nausicaa's startled shy surprise,
And David's ruddy face and wonder-gazing eyes.

Ah, since that old-world secret is so clear
To thee, prophetic singer, voice it forth!
Reveal some word to give to life new worth!
Utter the message that we wait to hear!
The weary world lies hopeless and outworn;
One glowing word from thee shall make her rise new-
born.

Yet no, so deep a message were in vain
To put in words; else were its worth but small.
No mystery it reveals, but one clear call —
The eternal pain of joy, the joy of pain;
A note ageless, immortal, sounding on
Unchanged, while all the changing years have come
and gone.

TO A WOOD-THRUSH

O let me drink thy song! drink o'er and o'er

A draught of airy joyousness like thine,

Thy secret wisdom and thy calm divine!

Drink in that soul which here thou dost outpour!

Once more that note, once more, and I shall be

Upcaught, enraptured, made a spirit glad like thee!

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT

THE long white street gleams in the moon's clear light,
While awed, mysterious, still, the houses stand.

We had beneath our vines sat hand in hand
As the slow moon rose and the porch grew bright.
We spoke of early years, of life made hard

By hopes we thought could never be attained;
We spoke of work, of love we since had gained,
All that from which we once had seemed debarred ;
And then She bade Good-Night and went within.

There stands the house — and all the world is mine!
I walk the lawn flecked with the clear moon-shine,
And present joy seems worth past discipline.

Two crickets to each other chirp reply,
While over all the quiet moon rides high.

SPRING'S PURSUER

I KNOW where dwells the shy maid, Spring.

(Form a ring!

Speak low!)

In a lane between two hills,

Where three rills

Trickle, tinkle, babble, patter, quick and slow.

There the young leaves' misty distance lingers;

And, while maples flaunt their brown and red,

And the white birch swings her dainty fingers,

Apple-blossoms riot overhead.

All around,

On the ground,

Violets blue and white are found.

Such a carpet ne'er was seen

When the maids of Turkestan

Spun and wove and wove and spun

Of their rugs a royal one

For the palace of a Queen,

For the harem of a Khan.

Spring has woven here her own

Carpet of pine-needles brown;

Where the downy fern up-pushes,

And the lady's-slipper blushes.

SPRING'S PURSUER

There the fox-berry's starred bands
Wander towards the swamp, where stands
Wet-shod, hovering on the brink,
Bare rhodora, veiled in pink.

There I heard a partridge drumming,
And a bumble-bee was humming,
Bound with lazy hurry on
Some boon errand for the Spring.
She had dropped some girdle-thing,
Bade him look where it had gone;
Sent a finch to hop and spy
Through the bare pine boughs, and fly
Back to her, that she may ask
How the bee performs his task.

I will find her, I will woo her,
Full of charm in every mood;
Beckoning gaily the pursuer,
Turning, flying, when pursued.

They all knew where Spring was hiding,
Spring, reluctant and confiding,
All the wood-folk saw her plain.
"There beyond you," trolled the linnet,
"Yonder thicket, she is in it.
Look, you cannot look in vain."
"Would you catch her, would you kiss her,

SPRING'S PURSUER

Here she is; you cannot miss her,"
Crooned the cat-bird in a dream.
And I saw (Draw closer! Listen!)
Almost saw her white feet glisten,
Almost saw her shoulders gleam!

Ah, good people, say,
Saw ye one Spring, sweet Spring, flit past this way?
In the next field shall I look to find her,
Or across the slope of yonder hill?
Is not that her fluttering robe behind her,
With whose breath the air is fragrant still?

Hush! The breeze
Whispers to the interested trees,
"She is coming, coming here again!"
And I know
Sure it must be so,
For she dwells, believe me, in this lane.

SPRING SONG

THE sun shines bright,
And the fields glow with light,
And the bobolinks are laughing o'er the corn,
And the finches twitter,
And the dewdrops glitter,
And the whole world smiles new-born.

O 't is good to drink the air,
And neither know nor care
Where the feet may of themselves chance to run;
Just to taste the present minute
And to bathe one's spirit in it,
And to give oneself to glory and the sun!

SONG OF THE GLOUCESTER FISHERMAN'S WIFE

EASTWARD I gaze day after day,
When my man has gone to sea,
And pray that the schooner that bore him away
May bring him safe home to me.

Oh, how does my heart leap up with thanks
Each time that I get him back
From the fishing-grounds on the northern banks,
From the fog and the steamer's track!

And when to the top of the Point I go
On stormy, wind-tossed nights,
I bless the sweep and the steady glow
Of the Thatcher's Island lights.

Oh, it's joy when I see the white foam flash,
As she rounds the Point for the town!
Oh, it's joy when I hear the anchor splash,
And the cable go rattling down!

THE GLOUCESTER FISHERMAN'S WIFE

The waves toss high and the spray flies straight,
And the vessel may ride that can;
But the fare I ask is no cargo's weight;
I ask her to bring but a man.

For a woman must live with a trembling lip
When her maiden days are o'er;
For the way of a man's aboard his ship,
But the way of the wife's ashore.

PINES

SEE how the pines, in these bright Summer days
When fields are gay, faded and lifeless show,
Scattered among the other trees, whose glow
Of living green the woodland-side displays!

And yet in grim December's biting air
Their sober dress of green these pines still keep.
Cheery they seem, while in their winter sleep
The other trees stand gaunt and pinched and bare.

So have I seen strong men of serious mould,
And women taught by years of love and pain,
Who seemed amid the holiday domain
Of glad free life but little place to hold.

But when bright Summer joys are flown away,
When friends are gone, when plans and hopes are
dead,
A glow of joy and strength around they shed,
While hearts, once thoughtless, reverent homage pay.

Little the world regards them in its mirth,
But, taught by sorrow, learns their needed worth.

ANDOVER

A HOLY calm pervades the place,
And even in common things we trace
A dignity, a special grace.

Yet Nature flaunts her glad array;
River and fields and hills are gay;
The graceful elms their fingers sway.

And man and Nature both combine
To heal the severance unbenign
That parts things natural and divine.

CHILDHOOD

THE UNBORN

SOME years from now, some soft delicious day,
When, just as now, the earth and sky obey
The law of harmony divine — the sun
 Flooding the earth with brightness, and the leaves
 Quivering with gladness, while the sea upheaves
Its little glittering wavelets, every one
Holding a diamond fair in sapphire set —
A little face we have not seen as yet
 Will gain new light, as God's own summer grace
 Enters his childish soul, and finds a place
Among the innocent fancies dwelling there;
 A little voice, which yet we have not heard,
 Will sing for joy, by all this beauty stirred,
Finding our world so wonderfully fair.

THE SEER

I PASSED where cheap-built houses stood
With garden-plots before them,
All in a row, while here and there
A tree or two hung o'er them.

I heard a sound, and heard again
The tones of satisfaction,
And looked around, but still could not
Unravel the transaction.

At length I spied a little child,
Who on the grass was seated,
Who simply said, "Hullo!" and then
Her greeting she repeated.

I passed unseen; it was not I
She had in contemplation,
But to the universe at large
She made her observation.

Blest child! I thought, to whom mere life,
Apart from all employment,
Is strange enough and rich enough
To furnish large enjoyment!

THE SEER

The air, the sunshine, grass and trees,
And every living creature —
Thou talk'st in freedom with them all,
For thou art one with Nature.

Or didst thou greet great Life itself,
And feel dim adumbrations
Of thought and passion, joy and death,
In all their variations?

I left the place; but still my eyes
With Nature's soul were meeting,
And still the sky, the grass and trees,
Gave back the childish greeting.

TO A CHILD

LITTLE man, with eyes of blue,
Seeking knowledge the world through;
Asking why the moon is round,
Where the flame goes when it's out,
What the rain says in the spout,
What the flowers do underground —
We, who know so many things,
Know the pain which knowledge brings,
Wiser we, of riper age,
Stepping slowly off the stage,
How we long that you may do
All that we have left undone!
Shining goals we would have won,
Lo, we pass them on to you.

All your wishes shall be poured
In your lap; our utmost hoard,
All is yours. Sleds and ponies,
Every toy-shop all your own is.
Cars and steam-ships, real and great,
Rich with every country's freight —
Europe, China, blue Azores,
Silken Samarcand, the glowing
Red Sahara, trade-winds blowing

TO A CHILD

From the spicy Indian shores —
All for you shall pour their wealth.
Honors shall you have, and health.
All that we have toiled to gain
Take it all; but give again
Just the touch we could not give.
Make our lifeless projects live!
Just the step we could not take,
Take it for us, for our sake.
Lo, we hand the torch to you.
Speed it on, more brightly burning!
Let your eye be more discerning;
Be your words more subtly true!
Blessings, blessings on you fall,
Little Paul!

THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

GRANDSON ERIC and Dear Helen,
In that charming home you dwell in
Let's have a Christmas Party, you and I.
And we'll ask in several others
Just for sisters and for brothers,
And we'll give them Four-and-Twenty-Blackbird Pie.

For a few must be invited
In whom we've most delighted —
R. Crusoe, with his parrot and his goat.
But we'll draw the line at Friday,
For we all are neat and tidy,
And we fear he might not wear a full-dress coat.

Dear Alice we must see, too;
Tweedledum and Tweedledee, too,
Although their conversation's rather slow.
But I think it won't much matter
If we don't invite the Hatter,
For he's just been at a Tea-Party, you know.

We won't invite Aladdin,
For perhaps he might be gaddin'
With a Genie, or some other shady tramp;

THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

And he might not think us bright, and
Might suppose we'd be enlightened
If he brought along his horrid dirty lamp.

It would make them to esteem us
To ask Romulus and Remus,
Provided they will leave the Wolf behind,
And we can give them what'll
Purchase them a nursing-bottle
Of a sterilized and up-to-datish kind.

But to make our guests all happy
And prevent their being scrappy,
There's the chief of all whom we must have. Because
We should have a fist-to-fist muss;
For no Christmas would be Christmas
If we did n't ask in dear old Santa Claus.

When they all have got together,
We must see about the weather;
For it might be raining fit to drown a fish.
So we'll hunt among the ditches
Till we find Macbeth's three Witches,
And they'll cook us just the weather that we wish.

Then we'll shoot the Chutes before a
Gaping crowd on the Aurora,
Riding up far into space from where it spreads,

THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

And come back upon a comet;
And as we sit there, from it
Drop down our peanut shells on people's heads.

We will dive beneath the ocean,
Where with swinging swaying motion
The banners of the brown kelp-ribbons wave
Round the rocks the coral worm made;
And there'll come a pretty mermaid
To invite us home to luncheon in her cave.

She will give us oyster-patties
And lobscouse — whatever that is —
So good that our shell-plates will ask for more.
And the crumbs will feed the fishes
As they flock to clean our dishes,
While she brings us up the green waves safe to shore.

Or we'll get some nutmeg-graters
And hunt for alligators,
And scrape them till their roughnesses are gone.
When we hear the tigers howling,
We can track them by their growling
And shoot them in the jungles on the lawn.

We had better take our pistols
When we go to see the crystals
Which the Gnomes are making underneath the ground;

THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

For they might attempt to harm us
Or do something to alarm us,
If we picked up any pretty things we found.

Then we'll take along some candy,
And we'll find a Noah's Ark handy,
And launch her in the meadow down the Brook;
And we'll sail along and try lands
Till we find some Tropic islands,
Where we'll beach her in a cool and shady nook.

There we'll wade among the shallows,
And dig sponge-cakes and marshmallows,
And pick the puddings hanging on each tree,
Till the wind blows cool and nipping;
When we'll all again take shipping
And sail away for home in time for tea.

We shall never have to own up
To a solitary grown-up
That we've all of us been having lots of fun;
For they'll think that you've been busy
With your toys, and they'd be dizzy
If they knew of half the lovely things we've done.

THE ATTIC

THE attic holds such lots of things —
My extra marbles, balls, and strings,
A warming-pan behind the door,
And beans spread out upon the floor;
With ears of corn hung on the wall,
Which I shall reach when I am tall.
And it all smells so queer and good,
Like Mother's fan of foreign wood.

Then on the nails some clothes are hung —
A cloak I had when I was young,
Grandfather's vest and tall white hat,
A thing I often wonder at;
And further, past the shoes and boots,
Regular clothes, and all in suits.
I've never known why they hang there,
Why we don't take them down to wear.
When it is dark, by half-past five,
They almost seem to come alive,
And then I'm glad to help get tea,
And not wait till Jane calls for me.

There in that corner all alone
Are things that are my very own:
A knife — the haft without the blade —
An arrow that one day I made,

THE ATTIC

And something that's my special joy
Far more than any other toy,
Of which I never can be tired —
A Roman candle that's been fired.

There are some things that may amuse:
The cradle that I used to use;
The rattle I would shake and bite
And pound about with all my might;
A pair of snow-shoes, that might break,
Such as, they say, the Indians make.
And there's a crutch, the very same
Some General had when he was lame.
I've named it "John" and take it out
And hobble with it all about.
But in behind my large Noah's Ark,
Past the big chimney, where it's dark,
I never like to go alone,
And what's in there I've never known.
Once, so that I should understand,
My brother took me by the hand
And in I went, prepared to see
Whatever might appear to me.
But I could hardly see at all,
And bumped my head against the wall.
The things that ought to have been found
Kept themselves out of sight and sound;
And back we came again; and so
What's there even now I do not know.

RICHES

I WALKED the hot and dusty street.
The dogs lay still and panted,
While on the doorsteps children sprawled
And brazen women flaunted.

Apart from these I saw a child,
Pale and but poorly thriving,
Who with a stick and bits of string
A broken chair was driving.

His self-absorption touched my heart —
That such high exaltation,
So absolute a bliss, should have
So paltry a foundation!

Small memory from the past had he
Or visions bright to treasure,
Of wood and field, of sea or stream,
To give to this its pleasure.

It was a dream of joys scarce known.
Simple imagination
Created field and wood and sea
Rich in its own creation.

RICHES

Such pure faith lent its wealth to me;
And o'er the street's hot glitter
I saw green swaying branches meet
And heard the finches twitter.

Saw open glades and heavy woods,
And paths wind in and out them,
And caught the scent of needles warm
Which pine trees drop about them.

Above the glare I saw white clouds
Hang o'er a summer ocean,
And boats at moorings lie and rock
With long and steady motion.

And jutting headlands, round whose base
Dark olive weed was streaming,
While on the clear horizon line
A sail or two was gleaming.

And still the child pursued his play
The while I stood surveying.
I turned and hastened from the spot,
Lest he should cease from playing.

MARRIAGE

HER BIRTHDAY

A NIGHT long years ago,
And the cry of a new-born child,
And the angel that held my soul in his hands
Looked suddenly up and smiled.
For the cry and the mother's groan
In the grey of the growing morn,
Came calling across the abyss to me,
For the half of myself was born.

A girl with dreamy eyes,
And a window open wide,
And she looks forth to greet the on-coming years,
And ask them what shall betide.
What will the bright years bring,
And who is her mate to be?
And from leagues away and unknown to both
The years were bringing me.

O cry in the far grey morn,
You were mine, for I hear you still!
You were mine, O dreaming girlish face
Gazing out from the window-sill!
I was born before I was born;
For or ever I saw the light,
The half of my life and my soul and my joy
Came into the world that night.

SHE

As when from out November days of gloom
Men long for Summer's brightness, far off seen,
And "Courage!" say they, "days and months have
been
Ere this; work on and wait; 't will surely come!"
As when 'mid swelling buds of early Spring
They feel already gorgeous Summer's glow,
And hearts leap up, and "It is coming!" now
They cry, and mark the daylight's lengthening;
And as when June is come, and Summer-time
Stands still while men drink in the glowing year,
They know their joy and say, "Yes, it is here!" —
So after boyhood dreams and youth's glad prime
I now in manhood vigor look on Thee,
And "She is come!" I say; "Yes, this is She!"

NIHIL HABENS ET OMNIA POSSIDENS

I GAVE my Love a kerchief blue;
It was the first thing e'er I gave her.
She looked adown; her thanks were few.
Was it her coldness, or her favor?

I gave my Love a diamond bright,
In which lay depth and passion meeting.
She gave me kisses as of right,
While life's awed pulses held their beating.

I gave my Love a plain gold ring,
The joyous goal of long endeavor.
She gave me — gave it glorying —
To love and live with her forever.

And now what have I left to give?
I stand, my poverty confessing;
She has my all. And yet I live
More than a world of wealth possessing!

THE TEMPLE PILLARS

WITHIN the house where Israel's God abode
There rose two Columns pointing to the sky,
Jachin and Boaz; one in majesty
The Strength of God and one His Beauty showed.
Whene'er the tide of full thanksgiving flowed
To Heaven, the glad procession passed them by;
And power and glory through them from on high
A blessing upon waiting hearts bestowed.

Within my own life's temple two Days stand,
This my Love's Birthday, that our Wedding-day.
Into the sacred shrine they mark the way
With strength and beauty upon either hand.
So point these Columns upward to the unseen,
While we in glad procession pass between.

A WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

THE earth expands again;
The joyous leaves are out,
And all about
Glad Spring runs riot with her pleasing train.
The apple-blossoms blush;
And hush!
Deep in the pine-wood sings the shy wood-thrush.
The year is in full tune;
And lovely May,
Lovelier each day,
Leads in the full-blown splendors of rich June.

O ever fresh surprise!
Not all the years,
Each decked in glory such as now appears,
Can make me view it with accustomed eyes.
The energizing power
Hid in midsummer's wealth of tree and flower,
In Autumn's sullen gloom
And Winter's tomb,
To-day proclaims itself in gorgeous bloom.

Our day, Love, comes again;
And quickened thought goes back

A WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On the year's track,
And that of all its antecedent train.
O joyous calm procession!
Holding in due possession
Glad, ardent hope,
Eager ambition's scope,
Passionate joys that thrill,
Dull disappointment's chill,
Long days whose quiet dress
Proclaims them days of deep-found happiness;
Only despair —
Limb of life rent from limb — is wanting there;
While work, desire, and aim,
A settled orbit and a centre claim.

O holy, glad surprise!
Not all the years,
Rich with the blessing which this day endears,
Can make me view it with unwondering eyes!
The beatific power
Which blesses every hour,
Which, whether felt or not,
Binds to itself, where'er I go, each spot,
Bursts into bloom to-day, and lo! I see
Its sway, its gladness, centering, Dear, in Thee!

CHOICE AND LIFE

A VALENTINE

WHAT is the flower of Life?

Choice.

Now all around

The small flowers spring;

Now stirs each thing

Where life is found.

Hark how the birds

From merry throats

Pour forth their notes

Which, set to words,

Say, "Thus I choose thee mine

To be my Valentine!"

Nature proclaims the fact

Of life's consummate act.

I too exult to-day with tuneful voice

In Choice!

What is the flower of Choice?

Life.

Birds make their nests,

And chosen pairs

CHOICE AND LIFE

Of lovers, theirs;
And choice molests
 Their thoughts no more,
 But growth controls
 And joins two souls
 Diverse before.

So thus I find Thee mine
Because each thought is Thine.
Each slight, unconscious act
Proclaims choice grown to fact.
Thus I exult to-day, my own dear wife,
 In Life!

OUT OF THE DEPTHS

THE sea was laughing, broad and bright and gay,
Under the bluest heaven, for Thou and I
Were in the boat together. Ah! to fly
Was nowise needed then; for far away,
Immensely far, as night from broadest day,
Was all life's darkness. Then with one wild cry
I fell! The sea engulfed me cruelly.
Up stretched my arms. "Ah, Love, come too, I
pray!"

Thou camest not. Then as the sea uncurled
I saw the darkness of the underworld.
Under the sea, in darkness, and alone,
I looked for God, and found Him. Had I died?
But wonderful past thought — there by God's side
Thou stoodest, shining like the morning sun!

BON VOYAGE

YOUR ship plows through the mass of dark grey sea.

There runs the line where ocean meets the sky.

I feel the breezes salt and cool and free,

I hear the sailors singing lustily,

I stand beside Thee on the deck — I see,

I feel, I know it all. My eyes meet Thine.

We do not speak, but I am there with Thee

And Thy beloved hand is touching mine.

We walk together up and down, in glee

Laughing aloud because our hearts are gay;

Or else we watch the waters silently

As into dusk the daylight fades away,

And the white moon rides up in majesty

And throws her silver bar across the sea.

TRAVEL

WHERE'ER I go, my Love, Thou meetest me!

The rhythm while onward speeds the rushing train;
The river's silence, gliding toward the sea;

The dim blue distance o'er the cloud-flecked plain;
The little child, with grave, believing eyes,

Trustful of all the world; the wit and thought
Which find fit words; friends' kindly courtesies;

The grace of all things being as they ought —
The stamp which shows a spirit-touch in each,

And makes all excellence akin through all,
After its absent kindred needs must reach,
And for its chief exhibitors must call.

This harmony which speaks in all to me,

Whom could it speak of, Love, but God and Thee!

LUCERNE

DEAR, when Thy journey brings Thee to this place,
And when Thou standst beside this lovely Lake,
And seest the mountains in their stately grace,
And distant peaks their magic colors take,
And opal water, violet, green, and rose,
Spread in a gleaming, glassy sheet below;
A spirit-hand may stir Thy hand's repose
And nestle there, while with the beauty's glow
Thy heart is full. For years ago a maid,
Young and with glowing heart, stood on this spot,
And filled with all the beauty here displayed,
She dreamed a dream of Heaven — I know not
what —
But, Dear, that dream has taken name and face,
And she stands with Thee in this lovely place.

ABSENCE

How glad am I to be awhile apart!

Not that Thy presence is not joy to me

And life; like breath and sunlight and the free

Clear morning air — such life to me Thou art.

But that Thine absence makes Thee present more;

For Thou art with me even when most alone,

So deep into my very soul has gone

Thy spirit's sweet and penetrating power.

Thou prophet, Absence, thy glad voice I hear,

That Death itself can send me to no spot

In this wide universe where She is not;

If I am I, She must be with me there.

Where art thou, Death? My Love and I have killed
thee!

O parting Space, my Love and I have filled thee!

MAJOR AND MINOR

WHY was I so glad, Love, when I woke this morning?
Earth and heaven were all aglow — all aglow with
you!

In my ears your words were ringing — not a hint of
warning —

Just “I love you!” Oh, those wondrous words —
could they be true?

Why am I so sad, Dear, now the dusk is growing?

Not that, false to her, you were falser still to me.
You are not the You I loved. Would I had died un-
knowing!

For love remains, but you and God have both ceased
to be!

FEARS

I

ONE summer evening, in the perfumed air
 Beneath our vines, where all was green and still,
We sat and talked. Somewhat of pain and care
 Had entered in, our serious minds to fill.
A passionate spirit, and what it may do
 To stir and ruin the fair stream of life;
The unseen depths that lay within us two
 Which might some day perhaps lead us to strife.
Until a sudden fear possessed and pained
 And shook me, though Thy hand my hand did
 press
And Thy warm cheek was near.
 Is nothing gained
By all our years of work and happiness?

And the night air sent back no answering tone,
While closer still we drew, yet seemed alone.

FEARS

II

SUCH moments could not last with Thee so near.

Nay, wert Thou far away, they still must fly.

For as white flowers through the darkness peer,

Or bright stars sudden through a cloudy sky;

Or as, a long hard week of work just ended,

A Sabbath morning breaks with blessed calm,

And, all disturbing thoughts in union blended,

Bathes the worn spirit in its sunshine balm;

So came a peace to me, a confidence,

A knowledge storms would threaten us in vain.

From storms without, our love was our defence;

Storms from within would vanish in their rain.

So my free heart could smile with God and Thee

At fears which but kind monitors should be.

CONCORDIA DISCORS

Kiss me again, now we are friends once more,
Now that the Harpies, strident-winged, are fled!
Here in my neck as usual lies your head,
And all is with us as it was before;
Oneness and you! And yet that evil spot
I hated in you so, I hate it still;
Though nothing troubles me, no fear of ill,
Now I am sure that you too own it not.

How loud the clock ticks hurrying through the gloom!
Why must a sense of saddening failure come
In God's cause even, in fighting for the right?
So fighting we are one. We rest, my Own,
As on a tomb two lovers carved in stone,
Silent. Have you forgiven me yet? Good-night!

THE THERMOMETER

Blow hot, blow cold,
Our love shall hold.
Blow cold, blow hot,
It matters not.
Hearts make our weather,
Two together.
Or here, or there,
The weather's fair.

TO ST. VALENTINE

Ho, St. Valentine! A simple thing I'm asking!

Not like so many, who beg a love that's new,
Rich, coy, or far away, your utmost power tasking.
What I want can surely not be hard for you to do.

No, St. Valentine! Only keep things steady!

No need to count o'er your pretty maids arow.
Send me for Sweetheart the one I have already,
The one that you sent twenty-five years ago!

THE SILVER WEDDING

I

O BUT to find my Love at home, after a time apart!
To hear her voice and to see her smile and to feel her
hand in mine!

Life comes back then to its course again, and gladly
sings my heart.

Then the sun may shine and the wind blow, or may
neither blow nor shine.

O but to find my Love here after the long years
past —

The sick years, the happy years — and to find they
have left us alive!

Looking ahead at the first I said, “What if the first
were the last?”

And now they are all behind us, the silvery Twenty-
five.

O but to find my Love again after the years are
done,

And we both are safely dead and awake, with the
new life stretching abroad!

For can She be She or can I be I, dear Lord, if we are
not one?

Lest the sun grow dark and there be no Heaven, hold
fast to Thy laws, O God!

THE SILVER WEDDING

II

But Age, they told me, was a leaden thing;
So heavy, men and women, filled with fear,
Would droop with hearts aghast when it drew near,
Earth lose its beauty, birds forget to sing,
Friendship grow stale, and love — ah! love would
fling
No more its glory on the darkness drear.
They told me — But I laugh! How is it, Dear?
Do we go moping? Why, I think we sing!
Our hearts sing soft as nesting birds in May.
Let any youth and maiden come and say,
Timid with wonder, what is passion's seeming.
Quiet we smile; we know they are but dreaming
Of that real life for which the poets pray,
The life we entered on our wedding-day.

LOVE'S IMMANENCE

How rich am I, that ample breath attends me,
Unpaid, unnoticed, servant of my days,
And year-long, asking neither thought nor praise
Unceasingly its ministration lends me!

How wealthy, having Law to fence me round,
While I, regardless, walk upon my way,
And never think of why the sunbeams play,
Nor what it costs to weld the solid ground!

How blest am I, O God, in having Thee,
Surer than thought; so that, neglecting chance,
I may, without one reassuring glance
Build on Thee with unthinking certainty!

Dear, how thrice blest, that our love is, not less
Than these, deeper than thought or consciousness!

LOVE'S PERMANENCE

“But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

St. Matt. xxii, 31, 32.

“BUT can love last?”

Yes, heart to heart joined fast,
Nothing can quench their glow, nothing can sever.
Age may grow grey,
Bodies may fade away,
But love makes men, like God, to live forever.

This, this we know;
For one must have its two,
If two are one — foreseeing,
Where thought can reach,
Each soul will carry each
Stamped in its inmost being.

For one means two, and two means four,
And four means fifty million more;
And fifty million stopped the sun,
Because they missed one little one.

God cannot rest in His eternal bliss
Without each atom which was ever His.
If Thou in me and I in Thee have grown
And both in God, then all we three are one.

FRIENDSHIP

TO A. E. B.

KIND years! How gently on thy head they lay
Ever anew some quiet nobleness!

As in the Spring the South wind's soft caress
Deepens the delicate greenery with its play,
While scarce we know it changes day by day,
So will the kind years ever love to press
Some joy within thy hand, will love to bless
Thy head with honors naught can take away.

Kind years! And when they lead thee to a place
Like Boxford, but even fairer, full of grace
And music and of sunlight and of trees,
Of songs of thrushes and of hum of bees,
Of glory fairer far than all of these,
How natural then to thee will seem its face!

ARTEMIS

L. S.

SHORT-SKIRTED, straight, and free I go
Through all the woodland green.
Where sings the oven-bird I know,
And where chewinks are seen.
I love the moss my feet below,
Above, the leafy screen,
The brook that trips and bubbles so
Its ferny banks between.
Mine is the pale young moon's first glow,
And mine her full-orbed sheen.
I range alone, to men a foe;
I am the forest's Queen.
Short-skirted, straight, and free I go
Through all the woodland green.

A BIRTHDAY

E. W. P.

MUST we be sad or merry on this day?

Oh grief in joy, to see thy vacant place!

Oh joy in grief, that Nature framed that face,
And sent thee forward on thine eager way!

A soul of passion, peering joyously

Into each realm throughout life's wide domain,

Counting all gain of others thine own gain,

Thy spirit reigned exultant, large, and free.

In thee we first knew gladness. Thou didst fill

All paths of life with duty turned to ease.

Is there a charm in moon-lit summer trees?

Does gracious word or action send a thrill?

They all are bound to thee, through thee are dear.

No, no, thou art not dead; thou still art here!

A WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

E. W. P.

THAT path of dear romance she loved so well —
Loved it in others' lives, and when she read
How lovers loved each other, and were wed,
And how love brought a joy no words could tell —
That very path, eight years ago to-day
She entered on herself. Within her lay
Rich dreams all full of color and delight,
And great ideals of the spirit's might
To conquer and enjoy, to love and live,
And gather in of happiness and give
Great heaping handfuls of it to the rest
Of human beings not so richly blest.

How radiant and free she took her way
Along that path eight years ago to-day!

A BIRTHDAY

C. M. L.

KINDLY the years have touched you, friend of mine!

To you what radiant souls have given love!

Many have poured their friendship, far above
The common kind, of temper high and fine.

Flower and fern and leaf and delicate vine

Have graced your sunny windows, so to prove

How to your care their hearts responsive move.

And in the later days — best gift of all! —

God sends a gentle daughter, fair and bright,

Loyal, and full of service, to delight

Your household; children's voices laugh and call.

And in the midst of all this wealth, your days

Are gliding, while God listens for your praise.

RING SONNETS

I

(To a Harvard Student, with a ring engraved "Veritas".)

*"And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads."
Rev. xxii, 4.*

I STOOD where came from all the earth a throng
Of noble souls to enter at Heaven's gate.
And there were men whom the world blest as great,
And those who suffered much, unknown and long.
There was the Statesman, whom no gain had swerved;
The Sailor, with his eye fixed on a star;
A child and doll; a Monk with scapular;
A Servant, and the Master whom he served.

I turned and asked a Youth in garments bright,
Who flying, marshalled all their glittering squares,
"What is that Mark each on his forehead bears,
Which sheds, unseen by him, a lambent light?"
"That is my Seal," answered the Heavenly Youth,
"On all who enter here. The Seal is Truth."

RING SONNETS

II

"A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth : and a word spoken in due season, how good is it !"

Prov. xv, 23.

WORDS flutter like leaves wind-driven here and there.

Some glad, some heavy with the weight of tears;

Some calm, some tremulous with hidden fears;

Some whose mere breath is music on the air.

A word that stirs the spirit — O how rare!

Truth, spoken from a noble heart, endears

The man who speaks it to us through all years.

We honor, follow, love him everywhere.

The seal of Truth is in his very heart,

And stamps his words as coins of precious worth,

Richer than all the wealth of all the earth,

Nay rather, of all wealthiest wealth a part.

Dear Son, may all words through thy lips that pass

Bear deep the golden Seal of "Veritas"!

TO H. M. F.

THERE is no gift that I can send to thee,
For God has heaped such wealth about thy feet,
Thou standest hidden, like a Princess sweet,
Behind whose ivied wall men cannot see.
Or like some strangely splendid foreign tree,
With fruit abundant in the tropic heat
Thou standest, in luxuriance complete.
Then when of love thou holdest such a store,
Why do I send, of love unneeded, more?
An added drop of friendly love from me
Is as a dew-drop added to the sea.
Yet, unabashed, my little gift I send,
For joy that thou hast called me "Dear" and
"Friend."

A LOST CHANCE

It was a chance to make you happy, Dear;
And all the time I thought that you were cross!
Your eyes were veiled, as if a web of floss
Hid all their lovely light, while, hovering near,
Some strange unwelcome presence gave you fear.
And it was only I ! A sense of loss
Sent me in grief away. I could not toss
My love against a soul that could not hear.

And all the time you were not cross, but sad !
One small, insistent, unasked word from me
Had sent you forth all smiling and all free,
All radiant again and straight and glad.
I missed your need, misunderstood your pain.
Would God would let me have that chance again!

OCCASIONS

ON A YEARLY WOUND CLOCK

LEFT TICKING THROUGH THE WINTER IN A
COUNTRY HOUSE

I

THOU hermit, Time-inspired,
Who, close retired,
Dreaming dost sit within thy cave of glass,
The while without,
Around thee and about,
The waves of hurrying life flow, ebb, and pass;

From these thou dwelst apart.
Careless thou art
Whether abroad stern winter tempests play,
Or whether flowers
Through summer's golden hours
Make change lamented and the meadows gay.

These are to thee unknown.
Silent, alone,
Thou keepest house within thy chamber strait,
Where with shut eye
Thou dost continually
Twist and untwist the spinning thread of Fate.

ON A YEARLY WOUND CLOCK

Yet thou a call dost hear,
When once a year
Thou dost step down into the road of Time,
And take thy bread —
Food for the year ahead —
And start afresh upon thine upward climb.

Thy years outlast our day;
Thou keepst thy way
When our forgotten graves have long been filled.
Yet nay, for we
Joyous shall outlast thee
When thy year-fed activity is stilled.

ON A YEARLY WOUND CLOCK

II

The clock speaks

Whence came these delicate wheels of brass,
 This quivering spring,
This dial telling of the hours that pass,
 This pendulum's rhythmic swing?

I cannot solve the mystery, and yet
 I feel them here;
Some sacred human hand, knowing, has set
 And wound the wondrous gear.

And now I seek a Master. Let me be
 In some loved spot
Where in the silence breathes a mystery,
 And harsh sounds enter not.

Where in the Summer, shadows quiver grey,
 And sunlight comes
Softened by green, and all the sunny day
 The summer music hums;

Where men are busy at their golden lore
 Of weighty books,
Books that shall last when students dwell no more
 In these green nooks.

ON A YEARLY WOUND CLOCK

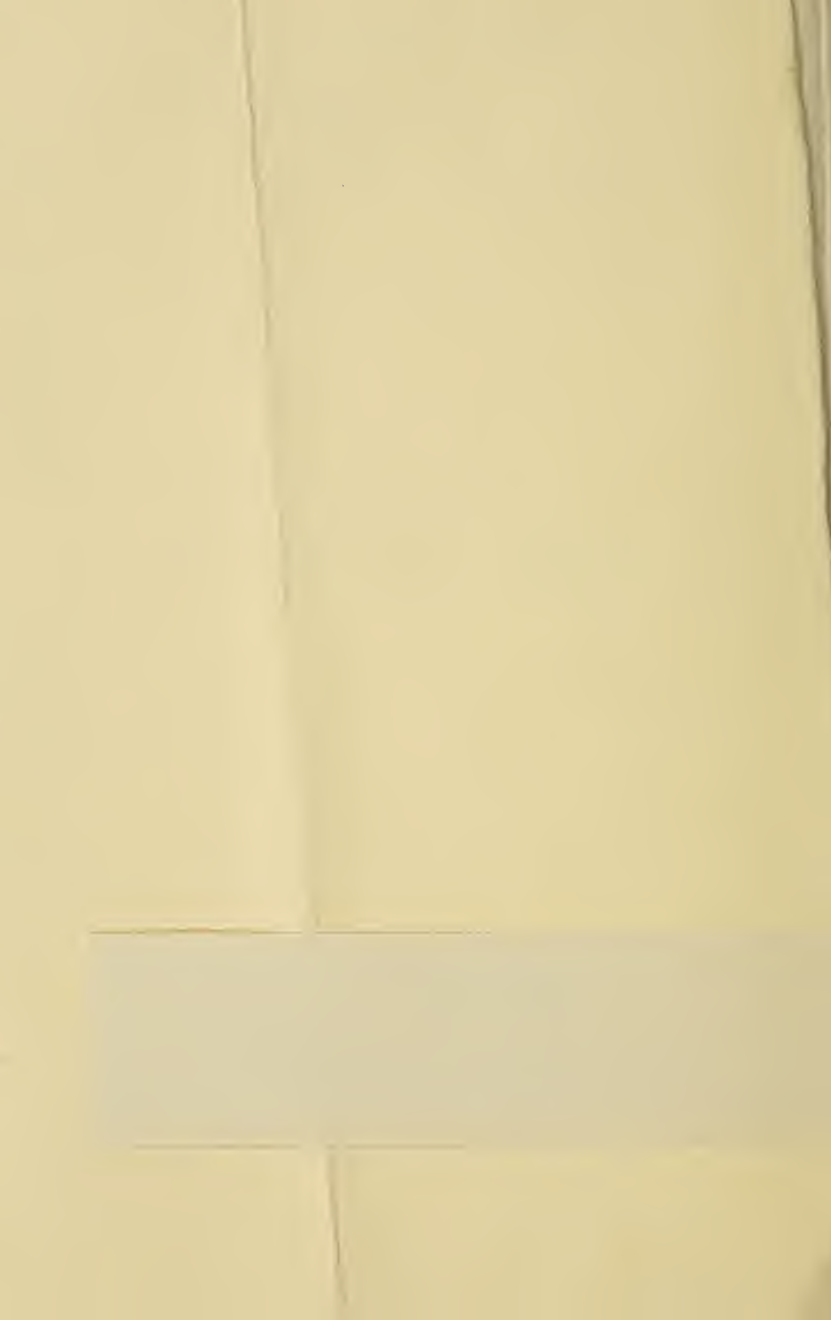
Where in the winter-silence, long and still,
In snow-soft nights,
A Beauteous One may wander here at will
Down from the heavenly heights.

She strays from room to room, with starry eyes
All soft the while,
Full of the glory of loved memories.
Half sadly she will smile,

And look upon me kindly, while she says
With mien sublime,
“How strange, O little clock, these mortal ways!
But where I live, there is no Time!”

ERRATUM

On page 89, last line, *for* our *read* out.



ON RECEIVING IN 1883 A TRANSLATION
OF THE ODYSSEY

I

WE four, in the bright June morning, sat and read
That book of thine, the work of many a year,
Wherein the early poet in cadence clear
Speaks to us now, by thee interpreted.
Freshly the story runs, as it were said
By some wise child who fain would have us hear
As he has heard, with that untired ear
By only Life's and Nature's music fed.

Breathless he speaks with interest and delight,
Repeating oft the same unstudied phrase;
And yet, so clear his eye, so straight his gaze,
That e'er he knows, the words have come aright.
He takes us back to that young world of his,
Bringing out colors, like the morning's kiss.

The morning mail had brought us in The Book,
And down we sat to run it through and look
Again on sweet Nausicaa's maiden grace
And the worn furrows of Odysseus' face,
When just as we were sitting down, we Four,
There came a sudden ring at the front door.
(A knock would have been fitter far, but things
Are changed and knocks have given place to rings.)
"There!" said Ἀπολλῆ (feminine of Apollo),
"We can't sit down but some call's sure to follow;
Here, let me run!" She bundled up her knitting,
Looped a stray lock of hair up, and was flitting,
When in there came a gray-haired, oldish party
With long and serious face, but kind and hearty
In voice and manner, moving slow each limb,
As if his eyesight were a little dim.
His clothes all looked, though not so fresh and gay,
Like Mr. Riddle's in the Cambridge play.
I just began, "Excuse me, Sir, but who —"
When down he sat before I said, "are you?"
"Ah, here my exile, if it is such, ends!
At last," said he, "I've got among my friends!
Just think, the President of Harvard College
Talks of admitting other kinds of knowledge,
From here and there and all about creation,
To take my place at June examination!
But there, don't mind me; egotism's bad breeding.

A TRANSLATION OF THE ODYSSEY

Go on. Don't let me interrupt your reading."
"Well, really, then," said I, "if you'll excuse us,
We've got a book we're thinking will amuse us.
This author writes poetic prose; embodies he
The very life and soul of Homer's Odyssey."
The old man gave a start and said, "Indeed!"
But Chrysostom took up the book to read,
The Doctor crossed his legs and smoothed his breeches,
'Απολλη set herself to count her stitches,
While I enjoyed the luxury in reading
Of being fed myself instead of feeding.

We chose the tenth book, where the woes begin.
Odysseus' crew have burst the wind-filled skin,
And raised, as if on Winter Street, the weather,
Where winds all come from every side together.
We read of Laistrygonia's strange night-day,
And how Odysseus' ship fled from the bay;
How as his fortune went from bad to worse, he
Found a year's prison in the house of Circe.
Our guest soon grew uneasy in his chair.
He muttered here and knit his forehead there;
And once I heard him say, "Confound the fellow,
With his new-fangled book of blue and yellow!"
Soon he broke out, "I'll leave it to you whether
This line 'Then all the ships went down together'
Is n't sheer poetry! Why, they'll find it easy!
They've always rendered βυκταων by 'breezy'!
This nonsense," he went on with louder clamor,

A TRANSLATION OF THE ODYSSEY

“Distracts attention wholly from the grammar.
Give a boy this, and he’ll soon cease to be
Well up on special forms of verbs in μ .
I’ll not endure it; I’ll —” but here I grew
Impatient: “But, Sir, pray, then, who are you?”
“What!” said he, rising, “surely you know me?
Author, proprietor, sole patentee?
My name is Homer. Your old friend I am;
We made acquaintance under Uncle Sam.”
But while he spoke, a something in his tone
Convinced me ’t was a tramp I once had known.
We’d met, indeed, at Uncle Sam’s, but slowly
Had dropped acquaintance utterly and wholly.
’T was not the great Ionian, clear of song,
Wise, child-like, eager, dignified and strong.
This fellow needed more than emendation
And was no nearer than a poor relation.
Besides, as he came in he made no bow,
While Homer nods. (Horace informs us how;
Which though to mention may not be good form, it at
Least is the case, “*Bonus Homerus dormitat*”).
Ἀπολλῆ smiled and he turned to accost her,
When I broke out, “Sir, you’re a rank impostor!
Get out of here at once and leave the Rectory!
None of your manners Ajaxy and Hectory!
That name you used just now is a misnomer;
You’re not the genuine, you’re Scholastic Homer.
This book and you, you’re right, cannot be friends.

A TRANSLATION OF THE ODYSSEY

This gives your death-blow; your dominion ends.
Schoolboys shall learn in studying Greek's laws,
Amazed, that parsing 's not its final cause.
This ends their born hostility to Greek.
Here living men and women move and speak;
Their life we feel; why, we can almost see 'em!
Not like wax figures in your old museum,
But men, who love and hope and fear and pray
And feel the interests that we feel to-day.
Come, there's the door, Sir! Leave! I'd have you know
I cut our slight acquaintance long ago!"

With this I turned him out and slammed the door,
And trust I never shall behold him more.
But as we all began to talk and wonder,
My eye fell on the bust of Homer yonder.
— I'll swear 't was so, although I know it's odd —
I saw it several times distinctly nod.

STEAMER-SONGS

I

THE LOADING

AH-O! Slack your brake, lower away steady!

Down goes the freight into the deep dark hold!
Look out below, men, stand by, ready!

Unhitch the chain, and away the crate is rolled!

Ah-O! hoist away, swing your boom over!

Drop the chain down on the brightly lighted pier!
Up the plank a bale comes. Grasses sweet with clover,
Your home is the meadows; what do you here?

Ah-O! Turk's Island washed out this salt for us;

These hides were roaming Colorado's plains;
Over Alabama the sky arched its vault for us,
To send us in this cotton its sunshine and its rains.

See, the hold is filling fast — earth's best and man's
best,

Stowed snug and trimmed safe for calm or for blow!
Once more lower away, and then she is ready drest;
Let the winch rattle round again, Ah-O!

STEAMER-SONGS

II

THE SMOKE

Free, free, free!

At last I have escaped into the air!

I had lain a sullen prisoner since that tree
Caught and held me in the long-ago somewhere.

How I chafed to feel the branches clasp me round!

How I struggled as we stiffened into coal!

How the mountains pressed us grimly underground!

They were dull and did not know we had a soul.

But it slumbered through the ages in the dark,

Till it burst beneath the boilers into flame.

Oh the rapture, as the first upleaping spark,

Escaping from the funnel, told my name!

And I grow and roll, involving and enfolding,

As my column rises dark and floats unfurled

To the fixed horizon vast, where I hold the vessel fast

As I tie her to the border of the world.

But I ponder as I hover and I hang,

What the power is that has come and loosed my chain.

I have felt man's mighty hand, and I cannot under-
stand,

So I hurry back to Nature once again.

ON A STATUETTE

[A faun holding his tail in his hand and;contemplating it.]

WHAT is it fills thy thoughts with sudden pain,
Thou merry Faun that hast not known a care?
Have haunts deep in the woodland lost their
charm,
Where thou so oft in noontide's sultry glare,
Pillowing thy head upon thy bended arm
Careless and free hast lain?
Have wood-nymphs ceased to seek thy favorite nooks,
Or run, with garments fluttering in the breeze,
Along the glades, under the moon-lit trees,
Or cross, white-limbed, the cool, clear, mountain
brooks?

Where is thy pipe, which 'mid the yellow grain
The half-awed reapers heard, and stopped to hear,
While thou from far, beneath some low-boughed
tree,
Madest the notes resound, thin, sweet, and clear,
Melting thine own heart with the melody
That swelled along the plain.
The world is fair to-day as e'er before;
The reapers listen for thy song again,
And turn to work. Why is their listening vain?
Why dost thou play and sing and sport no more?

ON A STATUETTE

Was it the sight, through a half-open door,
Of some tired laborer resting in his home,
With wife to cheer and babe to welcome him,
And flickering firelight filling all the room,
While thou, without, didst feel the world more dim
And colder than before?

Was it some troop of home-bound soldiers, few,
Flushed from the fight, while blood-drops stained the
ground?

Was it a church-bell's far, mysterious sound?
What was it filled thy heart with longings new?

Alas! poor Faun, futile is all thy pain!

Those old sweet days thou never more shalt see,
For thou hast looked upon a life more wide.
Some spirit-touch has found and wakened thee,
Some vision strange from which thou canst not
hide,

Yet seest all in vain.

Why did Fate show thee what thou hadst not known!

Thine eyes have peeped within her folded scroll

Only to see revealed a human soul,

Only to know thou hadst and couldst have none!

THE PARTY

QUICK, just a brush once more, and I am drest!

These men are famous whom I go to meet;

These women are both beautiful and sweet,
And I would stand before them in my best.

How I delight

In social concourse where wit glances bright,

And great thoughts leap

Responsive, and deep calleth unto deep!

And women's eyes,

Entrancing, make one wonder

If what is beautiful and what is wise

Must always, or can ever be, asunder.

Now am I in the midst, and all around

Bright talk and looks and laughter light abound.

Now let me fling myself in, glad and free.

This is the place where I have longed to be.

What does it lack?

Why am I holding back?

Why is my spirit entering not, but viewing

All as a passing show, itself pursuing

Apart some alien track?

I seek the true, the real,

Which hides and issues not through this ordeal.

THE PARTY

Out! into the air,
For that at least is free!
Here I may dare
To be what I would be.

It's over, then, at last!
The close, hot rooms,
The music-drunken flowers with faint perfumes,
The dance, the chit-chat and the crowd are past;
And what remains, oppresses —
The memory of the evening's foolishnesses.
The word I uttered without really meaning,
The thing I did but never meant to do,
The subtle social pressure contravening
The aim, which would be true —
Was this just now the case?
Yet here the clear sharp air tastes fresh and sweet,
The crisp snow crunches underneath my feet,
While full in face
Shoots the pale circle of the Northern Light,
And from heaven's height
Countless the eternal stars gaze calmly down.

No stern didactic frown
The face of Nature wears
At mortals' frail affairs,
But heaven's high roof

THE PARTY

In silence speaks reproof.
Here is the true, the real;
The eternal fact
Gives here its just and full expression,
With no confession
Of lying act —
Accomplishment divorced from high ideal.
These constellations hold their steadfast sway
Unchanged, unchanging. Let me be as they.

Yet can man's life be so?
Like stars that gaze at life, themselves unborn,
Passionless, thoughtless, giving praise nor scorn,
Nor change nor failure know?
Nay, for one child, one feeblest human creature,
With thought creative or with passion glowing,
O'ertops the stars, outshines their glory, showing
A deeper side of Nature's inmost nature.
I fall, for I can rise,
And God shall know me.
But you, ye skies,
That glitter far above me are below me.
You are God's furniture,
Decking the house where He abides,
Whose services to me inure.
You for companions have mere winds and tides;
But I walk free

THE PARTY

With Him and with His household — all mankind —
In whom I find
My measure — heights and depths — shown clear
to me.

That merry mansion then,
Where folly played with women and with men,
Is it not rather
One of the mansions of my Heavenly Father?
These are His guests, for they show forth His ways.
The house's customs are its master's praise.

When in its best
Body or mind or soul is drest,
Of God's own glory is it then partaker;
For Best is homespun and reveals its maker.

The accurate, just words
That man spoke, free from compliment or blame,
Kinship with truth eternal claim,
Exhibiting a charm which is the Lord's.

That woman's face
In beauty rare,
Where unconcealed
Shines forth the spirit's grace,
Proclaims with joy how wondrous fair
Must Beauty's self be, thus in part revealed.

Even those who hold
Small store of worth,
From them I wash out gold,

THE PARTY

As miners do from clods of earth.

Commercial smartness shows

An aim and speed, like those

Which ope heaven's gate and bid the soul to enter;

And even the rude, dull fool

I find a useful school

Of loyalty to one self-chosen centre.

Each thing here cries,

"See me, and rise!"

The festiveness in clothes, the kindly speech,

The friendly attitude of each to each,

Rebuke my dusty spirit's clownish dress,

And bid me deck myself in gloriousness.

O Lord, Thy house is fair, above, below,

Thy works and saints alike Thyself revealing!

O raise each thought, quicken each torpid feeling,

That Thine eternal fullness I may know!

HEAVEN

A HYMN OF PRAYER

FATHER, I fain would keep mine eyes
From selfish dimness free,
That not one ray from out Thy skies
Might shine unseen by me.

Father, I would mine ear might keep
Undeafened by earth's noise;
That I, like Samuel, even in sleep
Might hear and heed Thy voice.

O Father, might my timid heart
Beat with Thy knowledge strong,
That I, with an unerring art,
Might sever right from wrong!

I know not, sometimes, whether 't is
An angel speaks to me,
Or if some power from the abyss
Is tearing me from Thee.

Yet of these voices which dismay
I know one is divine;
I know there surely is a way
To tell which one is Thine.

A HYMN OF PRAYER

The power to hear, the power to know,
O Father, give me these;
And let my soul to largeness grow
By strong and sure degrees.

Then shall I have a holy strength,
And walk erect and free,
Till earth and heaven shall mean at length
One life, lived all in Thee.

A HYMN OF PRAISE

LORD, how shall I rejoice this day?
The fields their greenest tribute pay;
This clear bright sky, the sparkling sea,
Send forth their song of praise to Thee.

The birds sing praises in the trees.
I would be tuneful, Lord, as these;
Yet words of thankfulness or prayers
My mouth no more can frame than theirs.

Thou that hast made the winds to blow,
And knowest how they come and go,
Thou surely, too, the Author art
Of this dumb joy within my heart.

I can but lift my eyes to Thine,
And seek Thy loving hand with mine,
Thankful at heart, on this Thy day,
Thou knowest what that heart would say.

SUUM CUIQUE

IF I were but a grain of sand,
I'd sing my Maker's praises loud
In angles sharp, in substance, and
Arrest the thoughtless crowd.

Or if I were a gorgeous flower,
I'd flaunt abroad my Maker's praise,
Showing His colors hour by hour,
Painting to men His ways.

Or if I were a climbing hind,
My feet should tell my Maker's art,
Since for His praise He thus designed
And dignified that part.

So now I am a living soul,
My thought and will shall praise the Lord,
And all my parts with Nature's whole
Shout forth some glorious word!

AFTER THE RECEPTION

OUR minds too were in evening costume drest.

The stars came slowly out; the waning moon

Prolonging twilight for a little, soon

Red and distorted sank into the West.

We spoke of childish hopes that turned to pain,

The prized last moments of our dear ones gone,

Their life in us in which they still lived on,

And life-long sorrow working endless gain.

Until as we sat silent, hand in hand,

All time and place had vanished; we became

Spirits, unconscious of a lower claim

Of body or of thought. We seemed to stand

On the last peak where earth-born soul can be,

Peering into the dim eternity

SYMPATHY

THINKING myself alone one night I played —

Played carelessly.

The evening breeze came whispering through the shade

And so I played

Just what it said to me.

It whispered, "Cease your search, it is in vain;

Your friends are gone.

You cannot find true, loving hearts again;

It is in vain.

Be brave and live alone."

I think it was a simple minor strain

And then some chords

Which trembling came and sobbed and died again,

That spoke my pain,

My grief too deep for words.

And in the morning sunshine warm and bright

She came and said

Softly, "I liked the way you played last night."

Surprised I read

Deep in her eyes' clear light,

As blue and gentle as the sky in June,

A contradiction to my mournful tune.

DEATH

“A SORELY tired human being resting.

Eyes that no longer watch the pelting day;

Lips that no longer try to smile and pray;

Ears that no longer hear the empty jesting,

While the deep heart, life's earnest lesson testing,

Wonders, and vainly tries to join the play.

Thy spirit dwelt so long, like stag at bay,

Puzzled and wounded with the world's molesting!

And now, how good, simply to lie and sleep!”

Thus did I moan to ease my spirit numb.

Hark! Are the angels mocking that I weep?

Sure there is laughter, though thy lips are dumb.

Oh happy angels! may I ever keep

Your message clear, through the dark years to come!

INFINITY

INFINITY lay bare to me last night.

I saw the Milky Way stretch star on star,
Space beyond space, illimitably far,
Dim nebulae and ordered planets bright.
What Thought, outwearied in its utmost flight
Could not conceive, lay plain before my eyes.
I gazed upon it with a new surprise,
So unsurprising was the common sight.
Grave thinkers have discussed with deep surmise
Whether Infinity might be. Yet high
Beyond the depths far-reaching of the sky
Before my vision stretched the sought-for prize.

So when my eyes shall gaze, O God, on Thee,
Strange and familiar will the vision be.

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE

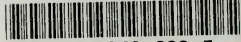
“LORD, I have seen Thy glory in the sky;
Such color as the angels bathe in, spread
Deep in the Western heaven, orange-red.
Let me but paint, before the glory die,
To show my soul hath on Thy beauty fed;
For here are precious pigments, fresh and wet.”
But God replied, “Not yet.”

“Lord, I have heard celestial harmonies,
Music the giant masters have not known;
It was the harpers round about Thy throne
Breathing their golden-throated symphonies.
To show I heard, let me some phrase intone
That those who hear may nevermore forget.”
But God replied, “Not yet.”

“Lord, I have seen Thee face to face, and know
That it was Thou and that Thou spakst to me.
The shadows fall and soon my life will be
Far spent. May I not speak before I go
Some word to show that I have been with Thee?
Ah, Lord, before my lips are sealed and set —”
But God replied, “Not yet.”

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